IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification by replacing paragraphs [004], [0010], [0012], [0015], [0019] and [0020] with the following replacement paragraphs:

[004] Each of the fiber optic cable designs—loose tube~~fiber~~, monotube, slotted core—may include other components, including reinforcing yarns and fibers, rip cords, and additional water-blocking materials (hot melts, water swellable powders, etc.). The fiber optic cables may also include helically wrapped tapes, corrugated armor and similar layers that help protect the optical fibers within the cable.

[0010] The present invention provides a buffer tube for use in a fiber optic cable, which is made of a polymeric material that exhibits crush resistance comparable to PBT resins, and provides flexibility comparable to polyolefinic materials such as n-PP. One measure of this balance between crush resistance and flexibility is flexural modulus. Thus, one aspect of present invention provides a buffer tube comprised of a polymeric material having a flexural modulu[[e]]s greater than about 180 kpsi at room temperature and having a flexural modulus less than about 370 kpsi at room temperature.

[0012] Still another aspect of the present invention provides a cable for transmitting a signal. The cable includes at least one optical fiber for transmitting the signal, at least one buffer tube for receiving the at least one optical fiber, and an outer protective jacket, which is disposed around the at least one buffer tube~~ the buffer tube~~. The buffer tube is comprised of an alloy of polypropylene and polyphenylene oxide.

[0015] Figure 1 illustrates a specific aspect of the invention and is ~~are~~ a part of the

specification. Together with the following description, the Figure demonstrates and explains the principles of the invention and is a view of only particular—rather than complete—portions of the invention.

[0019] It appears that PP-PPO alloys are able to achieve a good balance between crush resistance and flexibility because they exhibit a flexural modulus between that of PBT and polyolefinic materials. For example, an unfilled PP-PPO alloy exhibits a flexural modulus (at room temperature) of about 235 kpsi, whereas under the same conditions, PBT exhibits a flexural modulus of about 377 kpsi and n-PP exhibits a flexural modulus of about 180 kpsi. More generally, the buffer tubes 14 can be made of other polymeric materials that exhibit a flexural modulu[[e]]s greater than about 180 kpsi, but less than about 377 kpsi, as long as such materials also meet the requisite properties for buffer tubes 14 discussed above, which include chemical and heat resistance, dimensional stability, moisture insensitivity, etc.

[0020] The polypropylene—polyphenylene oxide alloy may be unfilled or filled (e.g., contain glass fiber, inorganic particles such as silica, talc, etc.) and may contain antioxidants, processing aids, and the like. The PP-PPO alloys can be made into buffer tubes 14 using any technique that is suitable for processing thermoplastic resins. For example[[s]], the PP-PPO alloys may be mixed under heat and pressure to liquefy the resin, followed by extrusion through an annular die to form the tube 14. Useful PP-PPO alloys can be obtained from GE under the trade name NORYL PPX.